
From: Sent: Sat 2/23/2008 2:25 PM
To: McClure, Shelby
Cc: Robison, Olimas; Stenger, Timothy; Butler, Robert; Fremd, Harry; Long, Edward
Subject: FW: Officer Safety/Radio Communications in Churchland

Gentlemen,

It is with regret, but not surprise, that this issue hasn't been corrected. In fact, it probably hasn't even been addressed since before Thanksgiving of last year. Poor radio communications is occurring in the Churchland area of the city, Cavalier Manor, and pretty much anywhere west of Elmhurst Lane. I've been told by my co-workers that this problem has existed since well before my 3 1/2 years as a cop in Portsmouth began, and police officers have tried to make an issue of this before but to no avail. I'd like you to keep in mind that I'm almost one hundred percent sure this officer safety issue will never be corrected so by no means am I getting my hopes up. This documentation via email is just for "in case" someone gets seriously injured or killed in any of these areas. I'm sure it's a matter of finances which is hindering the city's response to this problem, or perhaps city hall has no idea or concern about it. Maybe we can use the money we're saving by not allowing overtime to get better radio coverage throughout the so-called dead spots in the city. We all know that when the day eventually comes when someone's life is in danger and they can't communicate that to anyone via police radio and end up hurt or killed it's going to be an issue...and by issue I mean another preventable lawsuit. Now maybe the philosophy is that because we've gotten away with it for so long, it won't happen. But trust me gentlemen, if it's me laying on Brandon Lane or Augustine Circle shot to death because I couldn't transmit, well, good luck telling that one to my family and the media. This email is not meant to vent or to call out certain members of the department and command staff, but to provide documentation for when, God forbid, the day comes that one of my co-workers in the department needs it. Some cops ask me why I should even bring it up and my response is that should something tragic occur as a result of inaction or negligence on the part of the city, the department can't say they didn't know about it. I, as well as the rest of you, take officer safety as a #1 concern. It is more important than the public's perception of cops, the number of stats and precious problem solving reports required every month, and how you get along with other officers. I'm sure there are other cities in the area that have or had this problem and I am more than willing to research this further to find out if/how it was resolved if it'll help our department in the long run. I'm shocked we don't have officers refusing to work certain patrol zones due to this problem, but I'm sure when someone gets their tail handed to them and no one can hear it on the other end of the radio, we'll be having some requests to work in other areas. It's nothing more than luck that any of you weren't seriously injured or killed earlier in your careers because of something like this, so I urge you to give us on the street another avenue than just luck to stay alive out here. If there is no plan in the works or no money (surprise), then be honest about it, and enough with the song and dance about the repeaters and how they've constantly been being worked on for what seems like forever. I cannot stress enough that by no means is this request for action a laughing matter and it is certainly not my intent to be insubordinate. However, at times it seems that no one is listening to legitimate concerns in this department. I thank you for taking the time to read this email and hope that a solution or at least a plan of action can be implemented in the future.

Sincerely,

Ofc.

From: Butler, Robert
Sent: Fri 11/16/2007 1:39 PM
To: Cc: McClure, Shelby; Jacobs, Larry; Stenger, Timothy; Fremd, Harry
Subject: FW: Officer Safety/Radio Communications in Churchland

Officer,

According to Mr. Robison, we have been on the backup radio site for the past several weeks while the primary site is being upgraded. This may account for some of the radio problems that we have experienced during this time frame. According to Mr. Robison, the upgrade is expected to alleviate many of the radio problems that we have had in Churchland, and should be completed in approximately 2 weeks. Anticipating this upgrade taking care of many of the areas with poor reception, the repeater project has been placed on hold. Hopefully we will notice a big difference in a few weeks, so in the mean time, be mindful that there are some areas that do have poor reception. Even with the upgrade, there is no way to guarantee 100% radio coverage, although we are working to reduce these areas as much as possible.

-----Original Message-----

From: Butler, Robert
Sent: Wednesday, November 14, 2007 5:59 PM
To:
Subject: FW: Officer Safety/Radio Communications in Churchland

FYI - I have a meeting on Friday to see about this, and I will keep you posted.

-----Original Message-----

From: Butler, Robert
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 11:38 AM
To:
Cc: McClure, Shelby; Jacobs, Larry; Stenger, Timothy; Fremd, Harry
Subject: RE: Officer Safety/Radio Communications in Churchland

Officer - I will find out the status of the repeaters, and then let you know.

-----Original Message-----

From:
Sent: Sunday, November 11, 2007 8:47 PM
To: McClure, Shelby; Jacobs, Larry; Stenger, Timothy; Butler, Robert; Fremd, Harry
Cc:
Subject: Officer Safety/Radio Communications in Churchland

Gentlemen,

This email is to inform all of you, perhaps some of you are unaware, of the problem with transmitting from our portable radios in the Churchland area of the city. On two occasions this evening, as 241C, I transmitted from my portable radio just to prove a point that this was still an officer safety issue. The first time I was out with 6 people next to Hollywood Video in the 5900 Block of High St. West. However, in CADS, I was on a suspicious at 801 High St, now I don't know if Communications guessed or what happened, either way no one knew where I was. The second incident occurred when I came upon two disabled vehicles on the Western Freeway, that transmission was totally unreadable and another officer had to advise Communications of what I had and my location. Granted these two incidents led to nothing i.e. 10-1's...errr, Signal 1's or 10-13's or Clear the Air. But it's not comforting at all to know that this has been an issue since apparently the better part of the city's history. I know the Repeaters were supposed to fix the problem over a year ago, but no one was trained on them or even told IF they work let alone HOW. I know several officers, at least on 1st Platoon, have expressed their concern over this same radio/officer safety issue in the past. So now that I've brought my logical point to fixing the problem, let me give you my opinion on the fiscal point. If something were to happen to one of us on the street due to radio failure that the department knew about and did nothing to correct it, can you imagine the lawsuits that would come from that? Most of us that are concerned about this officer safety issue have told family members and close friends outside the department that if something were to happen to us, and just so we're clear by that...I mean getting killed in the line of duty, that they should consult with our co-workers and/or attorneys and find out if in fact it was preventable. The cost of improving or changing whatever is wrong with this Communications system is going to be far less than the cost of ANOTHER preventable lawsuit against the City of Portsmouth. I assure you that this is not a rare occurrence but this problem is noticeable everyday at several times per day, just turn on your radios and hear it for yourself.

Sincerely,

Ofc. Uniform Patrol Division